Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

INDEX

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR CENTURY FAMILY FARM AWARD 08-09-35

AG-WEST BIO HELPING TO BUILD TEAM CANADA FOR CONFERENCE 08-09-36

COMMODITY PRICES ENABLING FARMERS TO UPDATE MACHINERY 08-09-37

KNOWLEDGE OF PROPER CALF SCOURS TREATMENT A MUST FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS 08-09-38

CROP PLANNING GUIDES HELP PRODUCERS GET READY FOR SPRING 08-09-39

Farm and Food Report is produced weekly by the Zapwell Communications Group for Communications Branch, Saskatchewan Agriculture
Contact: Amanda Dauk
101-3085 Albert Street, REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN S4S 0B1
Telephone: (306) 787-5157, Fax: (306) 787-0216
Internet Page: http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca

Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

Log Number: 08-09-35
Week of February 25, 2008

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR CENTURY FAMILY FARM AWARD

Saskatchewan has witnessed some remarkable contributions from its citizens during its more than 100-year history – none greater than those of its agricultural producers.

The Century Family Farm Awards, which are now accepting applications for 2008, offer a wonderful way to mark that legacy.

Introduced in 1981, the award is available to families that have farmed the same land continuously for 100 years or more.

In recent years, the application process has been made easier than ever.

In 2005, the Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan (ISC) and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture began co-ordinating the awards as part of the province's centennial celebrations. Then, in 2007, ISC took over managing all aspects of the program itself, which has allowed some procedural streamlining.

"The goal was to try to make the application process as easy for the families as possible," said Julianne Jack, the Manager of Corporate Communications for ISC.

In the past, applicants were required to supply all historical documentation with their applications. This often involved some detailed researching and combing of family archives, she noted.

As the provincial Crown corporation responsible for the administration of land titles, however, ISC will now conduct a search of its online database on behalf of all applicants, at no cost to the families.

"We have the information right here on our database, so it made a lot of sense for us to do that for these families," Jack said. "It streamlines the process quite a bit, and makes it easier for people to apply for this wonderful tribute."

Additional information and application forms for the Century Family Farm Award are available on the ISC website at www.isc.ca/cffa, or by calling toll free 1-866-275-4721.

The deadline for submitting 2008 applications is March 15. Families will be honoured at celebratory events across Saskatchewan in June.

(more)

In order for a farming operation to be eligible for a Century Family Farm Award, members of the same family must have farmed the land continuously for 100 years or more. The family must live in Saskatchewan and continue to operate the farm. Applicants are eligible for one award per eligible landowner.

Recipients have the option of receiving an etched glass figure or an indoor wall plaque free of charge, or a gate sign for an additional fee. They will also receive a copy of the original land grant or title to their family's property, and up to 12 award certificates will be provided to distribute to family members.

Jack says ISC is proud of the role it plays in honouring Saskatchewan's farm families. "A hundred year anniversary – just imagine. One family, owning a farm for all those years, passing it down through generations – it's a fantastic event," she stated.

"These families have done a lot to build our province, and we're really excited to be a part of recognizing their contributions."

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Julianne Jack, Manager of Corporate Communications
Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan
Phone: (306) 798-2136
E-mail: julianne.jack@isc.ca

Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

Log Number: 08-09-36
Week of February 25, 2008

AG-WEST BIO HELPING TO BUILD TEAM CANADA FOR CONFERENCE

Saskatchewan biotech companies and organizations are being surveyed about their interest in attending the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC) to be held in Ireland this August. Ag-West Bio Inc. of Saskatoon, a member-driven organization funded by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, is seeking those interested in joining a Team Canada mission to the conference.

ABIC is the creation of former Ag-West Bio President Murray McLaughlin, who put together the first conference in Saskatoon in 1996. After two successful editions, profits from the meeting were set aside to create the ABIC Foundation to continue organizing future international meetings.

"He saw the need for business and science to come together," said ABIC Project Manager Muriel Adams. "Business couldn't get their heads around the ag-bio concept, so they brought in speakers from all over the world. It was so successful that they did it again, and then created the foundation."

"Now the foundation works with conference organizers to help them deliver successful ABIC conferences."

The ABIC conference brings together leaders from government, industry and science across the spectrum of ag-biotech activities, including applied research in agriculture, food, bioproducts and bioprocesses. This Saskatchewan-born idea went abroad in 2004, when the conference was held in Cologne, Germany, and then Melbourne, Australia, in 2006. After this year's edition in Cork, Ireland, it moves to Bangkok, Thailand, in 2009, and returns home to Saskatoon in 2010.

"We've had similar trade missions in 2004 and 2006," Adams said. "Currently, we are working with BIOTECanada and sister agencies in other provinces. We hope to take 40 to 60 people to represent Canada in Ireland."

Adams lists a Saskatchewan who's who of leading companies and agencies that have attended past ABIC conferences, including Performance Plants, Philom Bios, the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron, University of Saskatchewan plant and animal sciences personnel and VIDO representatives.

The survey going out to potential attendees is intended to provide a basis for planning productive meetings at the conference. "It is to give us a better idea of what we can do when we get over there," said Adams. "We're also working on bringing trade missions from other parts of the world to the conference, then we match them with the delegates that we've taken with us."

(more)

As an example of the kind of collaborations that can result from this conference, Adams points to the alliance of Saskatchewan's Performance Plants and Africa Harvest Biotech Foundation International, which was forged at ABIC 2007. The two organizations have agreed to use drought-tolerance biotechnology developed in Canada to help ensure sustainable food production in Africa.

With attendance of up to 1,000 delegates from as many as 40 countries, ABIC offers enormous potential to take Saskatchewan biotechnology to the world, and to bring the world to us.

"It creates opportunities to showcase Saskatchewan businesses, and to generate interest in Saskatchewan as the place to do business in Canada," Adams said.

Companies and organizations interested in becoming part of the Team Canada mission can find out more from the Ag-West Bio website at www.agwest.ca. The survey of potential attendees is being coordinated by Jazmin Bolanos, Special Projects Manager for Ag-West Bio Inc., who can be reached by phone at (306) 668-2659 or e-mail at jazmin.bolanos@agwest.sk.ca.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Muriel Adams, Project Manager
ABIC Foundation
Phone: (306) 955-0545 or (306) 975-1939
E-mail: muriel.adams@abic.ca

Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

Log Number: 08-09-37
Week of February 25, 2008

COMMODITY PRICES ENABLING FARMERS TO UPDATE MACHINERY

There is just something about new metal. And lately, the metal has been flying off the lot at a pace not seen in years.

Record high commodity prices are driving a strong increase in machinery sales in Saskatchewan.

"It has got to be over five years since we have seen demand like this. It has been a long time coming. It's great, it's upbeat and it's fantastic," said Jerry Engel, President of the Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada (AMC).

Engel says the 178 companies represented by AMC are reporting robust sales.

"Sales are just great. There is a very optimistic feeling in the agricultural sector. We just went through two trade shows and the response was extremely positive," he noted.

"The food producers of the world have their cheque books out, and they are buying equipment. They finally have an opportunity to update their equipment."

Engel says there are a number of factors driving the demand, but commodity prices are at the top of the list.

"Grain prices are number one. Producers finally have a little money in their jeans. This gives them a chance to buy that equipment that they wanted to buy for some time, but couldn't," he stated.

All that demand does have a downside, however. The days of buying a machine and taking it home that day may be gone, for the most part.

"The only downside is the challenge facing manufacturers to keep up with the demand. We all know about the skilled labour shortage, and there is no doubt our industry is affected – but the industry can deliver," Engel said.

"Granted, you may not be able to buy something right on the spot, and you may have to wait a month or so to get that piece of equipment, but the manufacturers in Canada look after the Canadian market first, then look to outside markets like the U.S. and abroad."

(more)

Indeed, demand from Eastern Europe for farm equipment is a factor. Saskatchewan manufacturers who export to countries in that region have seen enormous growth over the past few years.

Engel says the question for agricultural machinery manufacturers is the same as it is for producers: how long will it last?

"The farmers are optimistic, but they are cautiously optimistic," he noted. "So they may want to upgrade four or five pieces, but will only do one or two. They are farmers. They know that it may be good today, but the prices may drop tomorrow.

"However, I don't see this as a one-year wonder. We are enjoying this great year, and hope it will continue."

AMC, formerly know as PIMA (the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association), is a national lobby association that speaks on behalf of the agricultural manufacturing industry.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Jerry Engel, President
Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada
Phone: (306) 522-2710

Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

Log Number: 08-09-38
Week of February 25, 2008

KNOWLEDGE OF PROPER CALF SCOURS TREATMENT A MUST FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS

It is one of the most common signs of spring in rural Saskatchewan – vibrant and lively calves playfully bounding around a pasture. To nurture them to that stage, however, producers often have to treat a common ailment that can take a serious toll on the young animals: calf scours.

Calf scours is a frequent illness in young calves, and can be caused by several different viruses, bacteria and organisms. Normally, it is a problem in the first month of life.

Affected calves suffer from various degrees of diarrhea. A young calf can quickly become dehydrated; electrolytes become unbalanced and energy reserves are depleted. In severe cases, calves, especially younger calves, can die from the disorder.

So significant is the issue that the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan (FACS) has devoted one of its many "Cattle FACS" fact sheets to the subject in order to help producers gain more knowledge in this area.

Dr. Colin Palmer, an associate professor with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, worked on the calf scours fact sheet. He says one of the most important steps in protecting the young animals from the disorder begins in the first few hours of its birth with the ingestion of colostrum, or first milk, from a mothering cow.

Newborn calves have virtually no immunity of their own. Instead, antibodies are transferred to them from their dam through the colostrum. These antibodies protect the calf from disease for the first two months until it begins to make its own antibodies.

"A major factor influencing the survival of calves is the level of immunity at the onset of diarrhea," Palmer stated. "The calf must get colostrum."

When the young animals develop scours, it is vital to correct the dehydration, acidosis and electrolyte imbalance that occurs. As a result, fluid therapy is the cornerstone of any treatment.

In most cases, if the calf is still able to stand, electrolytes given orally by tube will help the condition. If the calf is down and severely depressed, however, intravenous therapy may be required. Calves that have "crashed" from scours are also hypothermic in many cases, and may need to be warmed up before they are treated, otherwise they may not absorb fluids administered orally.

(more)

According to Palmer, the appropriate response will be determined by the severity of the symptoms.

If the calf has diarrhea, but is bright, alert, responsive and not depressed, immediate treatment is not necessary; however, the animal should be monitored closely in case its condition deteriorates.

If the calf has diarrhea and is slightly depressed, it should be allowed to nurse the cow as normal, but also be tube-fed with two litres of commercial electrolytes, one with an alkalizing compound in it, twice daily until the manure begins to firm up or the calf is no longer depressed. If more than two days of therapy are required or the calf stops nursing, a veterinarian should be contacted.

If the calf has diarrhea, sunken eyes (which is a sign of dehydration) and is very depressed, the producer should consider contacting a veterinarian, since intravenous fluids may be required. If the producer wishes to try treating the calf him or herself instead, the process can be fairly complicated.

"Tube-feed the calf with two litres of electrolytes twice daily until the manure begins to firm or the calf is no longer depressed. Stagger these feedings with one-and-a-half litres of whole milk twice daily, assuming the calf doesn't suck," Palmer said.

"Give a broad-spectrum intramuscular antibiotic once a day for three consecutive days, and if more than three days of therapy are required, call your veterinarian."

The Cattle FACS fact sheet on calf scours, as well as many others on a variety of important topics related to cattle care, can be obtained on the organization's website at www.facs.sk.ca or by calling (306) 249-3227.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Dr. Colin Palmer, Associate Professor, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences
Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan
Phone: (306) 966-7150
E-mail: colin.palmer@usask.ca

Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

Log Number: 08-09-39
Week of February 25, 2008

CROP PLANNING GUIDES HELP PRODUCERS GET READY FOR SPRING

Farmers crunching the numbers for the coming growing season now have some help in calculating their budget forecasts.

The 2008 Crop Planning Guides provide information to aid producers in their annual evaluation of crop costs and returns. There are guides for each of the three soil zones in the province – black, brown and dark brown – plus a guide specifically geared towards specialty crops.

The guides are an annual offering compiled by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. They can be obtained online at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca, from any of the ministry's regional offices in the province, or by calling the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

"They are essentially based on a wide range of research done by Saskatchewan Agriculture and plugged into a single resource for the benefit of producers," said Mike Scott, a Farm Management Agrologist with the ministry.

In total, the guides cover all the major crops and even many of the less prominent crops grown in the province, including spices, oilseeds, pulses and much more. They help farmers estimate the income and cost of production for growing these crops on summer fallow, conventional stubble and direct-seeding into stubble in the various soil zones.

"We do our research mostly in November and December, and we put the guides together in January each year. We look at all the different costs that are involved for a farm to grow a crop," Scott noted. "For the prices, we'll survey different grain analysts and get their ideas on what they project prices to be for the coming year. It's always somewhat of a challenge, because it's a bit ahead of time, but these analysts give us their best projections."

Yield estimates are based on averages provided by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, supplemented by other sources as required.

On the cost side, companies that supply inputs such as fuel, fertilizer and chemicals are contacted for information, which is then factored into the calculations.

However, Scott emphasizes that the data compiled in the guides represents general information, not actual costs or yields on which anyone should be banking. "We always try to make a point of that.

(more)

Some of these predicted costs are snapshots of the time from November and December, so a producer certainly shouldn't be using the numbers as the 'be all and end all,'" he said.

The prices of some inputs, such as fuel, can be quite volatile and difficult to project, even a few months in advance. Many producers also have long-time suppliers for various products through whom they are able to get preferential pricing. Furthermore, individual numbers can differ notably from farm to farm.

"Large variations in yields and costs do exist between individual operations, so producers are encouraged to use the budgeted figures included in the booklets as a guide to develop estimates for their own farms," Scott said.

"Past farm records, adjusted to expected changes in 2008, can be used to develop their own budgeting figures. That's why blank budget planning sheets are included with each guide. Farmers can put in their own costs for their own farms and stack them up against these different costs, and compare their own yields that they feel they can get to the yields that we are using."

All in all, the guides should help producers to plan in what could be an exciting growing season.

"It's a pretty explosive year with grain prices ratcheting up," Scott said. "They're already higher than we predicted for a lot of the commodities, which is welcome news. Hopefully it stays that way."

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

Mike Scott, Farm Management Agrologist
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture
Phone: (306) 798-0949
E-mail: mscott@agr.gov.sk.ca